

### Message from the Executive Director

There is perhaps no issue more complex, more challenging, or more strategic facing our nation today than that of providing equal educational opportunity for all young people. As we enter the 1980s, one thing is clear to Aspira: our struggle to achieve equal opportunity for Hispanic youth is, in many ways, only beginning.

We are caught in a vicious inflationary spiral which depletes already scarce resources. Federal support for educational programs is under increasingly severe pressure. Local support is not keeping pace with needs. And through it all, the students are paying the supreme penalty. A recent report by the U.S. Department of Labor noted that, "Puerto Ricans are at the bottom of the skill ladder."

Our students know better than any one else the high price one pays today for an inadequate education. So too do their parents, according to a Gallup Poll on how people ranked the importance of college education. The poll found that the poorest and least educated adults gave educational achievement the highest rating, higher even than their better off and better educated fellow citizens.

How can this confidence and faith in the value of education be translated into constructive action? Aspira, representing the interests of the Puerto Rican communities throughout New Jersey, has taken the lead. It has focused attention on the problems of the youth in our schools by showing, on a day-to-day basis, how critically helpful counseling, guidance and personal contact can be. The records of educational achievement demonstrate the effectiveness of these efforts.

Beyond that, Aspira has played a key role in fostering effective action at the level of higher education through its leadership in establishing the Hispanic Association of Higher Education in New Jersey. Through this organization, public officials and educators have been sensitized to the need for providing greater access to the kinds of education essential to achieving a productive role in contemporary society.

In another advocacy role, Aspira has developed its annual forum where elected officials, educators, business leaders and others gather to learn, firsthand, about the realities facing the Puerto Rican community. Our keynote speakers, Congressman Robert Garcia in 1978 and the Honorable José A. Cabranes in 1979, made presentations directed at informing influential and concerned citizens about the main issues the Hispanic commu-

nity confronts. Widely reported, these annual meetings have become an important feature of Aspira's total program.

Yet there is more that must be done to ensure the educational future of Hispanic youth. Parents must make their voices heard to strengthen education as a priority in the competition for scarce government resources. We must continue to reach out for the support of enlightened leaders in the business community who realize that education is the best assurance of trained manpower for tomorrow's economy. We must encourage the efforts of politicians, like Congressman Garcia, whose ideas can compete effectively in the continuing debate over our nation's priorities.

The foundation community is responding as never before to our programs and objectives. And the business community, led by New Jersey Bell, PSE&G, Prudential Insurance Company and Midlantic Bank, is awakening to the significance of the contribution Aspira's efforts can make to the social and economic well-being of our State.

Thus, with the widening involvement of our own community and the gathering strength of the educational, business and philanthropic leaders, Aspira is confident that its work can be sustained and its objectives fulfilled in the challenging decade to come.



*Grisel Ubarry*  
 Ms. Grisel Ubarry  
 Executive Director  
 March 1980

## Introduction

Established in 1968 as a community-based, self-help agency, Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey works, through education and leadership development, to break the grim cycle of poverty, inadequate schooling, and sense of helplessness for Puerto Rican and other Hispanic youth. This report reflects the significant and positive accomplishments of Aspira during the year ending June 30, 1979.

Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey serves teenagers and young adults from low-income families in Essex, Passaic and Hudson Counties. Our clients are mainly Puerto Rican, but we also serve other Hispanics, as well as White and Black teenagers. The range of young people served is very wide. Some have left school and are in search of work; others are below grade level, have little incentive to attend school, and are in need of tutorial services and educational counseling. Some are students undecided about pursuing higher education and are looking for guidance to alternatives. Still others need to become involved in creative and productive activities to enhance their self-image and occupy their time constructively.

Aspira continues to place strong emphasis on high school achievement and college and graduate school placement. During fiscal year 1979, Aspira provided educational, recreational and counseling services to a total of 2,523 Hispanic young people—375 more than the previous year. Over 1,350 of these students were new to the program. Since it was founded in 1969, Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey has provided services to 6,900 teenagers and young adults.

Last year, Aspira helped 366 students gain admission to colleges, medical, graduate and technical schools.

One of the main thrusts of the Aspira process is the Leadership Development Club. In these high school Aspira Clubs, students learn organizational skills and procedures, participate in decision-making processes and develop values which favor education, responsibility, commitment and involvement in social issues. We are especially proud of one Aspirante, the President of the Aspira Ferris High School Club in Jersey City, Paul Vasquez. He was one of 25 young people in the U.S. who were chosen to serve on the President's Advisory Panel of the U.S. Commission on the International Year of the Child.

In the last two years, our programs have expanded beyond helping only those with a clear potential for higher education. We are now locating Hispanic teenagers outside the reach of a school-based approach, and offering vocational and adult education, juvenile delinquency and drop-out prevention, early intervention and neighborhood preservation programs.

The following are program highlights from each of Aspira's three County Centers. The activities are listed as a measure of the wide range of opportunities which Aspira's program offers. Each Center, taking its cue from the students themselves, develops programs which the group agrees upon as deserving high priority.

## Essex County Center

Located in Newark, the Essex Center serves students from the area's junior and senior high schools, and from as far away as New Brunswick. Counselors and Club Organizers work with students in school through the Aspira Clubs.

For those 14 to 18 year olds who are not in school, Aspira received a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration grant for *Proyecto Armonia* (Project Harmony). Its objective is to reduce the incidence of crime in Newark neighborhoods through the involvement of youth and adults.

Youth in Action Clubs are paired with adult Community Action Groups to work on specific aspects of crime prevention. Youth counselors meet with Proyecto Armonia recruits at a number of housing projects, parks, and playgrounds. Activities of the Clubs include films and speakers on drug abuse, visits to courts and law schools, and rap sessions with police.

Through two pilot projects in vocational education and adult education, Aspira counselors worked with "in-school" drop-outs, (students who are technically registered in school, but are frequently truant and have failing grades) and actual drop-outs who have formally left school without graduating. The aim of the in-school project is to help students discover and use their latent talents and interests.

Those who have already dropped out of school are encouraged to enroll in an adult education program to gain practical vocational training or to work towards achieving a high school equivalency diploma.

Because more than half of all New Jersey's Hispanic students are dropping out of school, there is an urgent need for innovative methods to reverse this trend. Aspira expects these pilot programs in adult and vocational education to provide detailed information that will help develop and expand its work with drop-outs and potential drop-outs.

The health careers program is active at both the high school and college level. There is a Health Careers Club for high school students in Newark, and pre-med clubs at both CUMED and Rutgers University. This year 13 students were placed in medical schools, three in dental schools and three in graduate health schools with the help of the Aspira process.

In January 1979, the Geraldine Dodge Foundation awarded Aspira a first-time grant for workshops in the creative arts. The workshops are designed to: expose Hispanic teenagers to art of outstanding quality; to bring art to non-traditional audiences; to encourage young talent; and to give recognition and support to Puerto Rican artists, both amateur and professional.

## Hudson County Center

This Center is funded by the **Law Enforcement Assistance Administration**. Called *Proyecto Amanece* (Project Dawn), it was created to provide constructive activities to motivate drop-outs and potential drop-outs to complete their education, and to prevent them from getting into trouble with the law. There are clubs in Hoboken and Jersey City located in schools and neighborhood centers. Club Facilitators also recruit students whom they see hanging out on the streets. In addition to community action, the program includes education and recreational activities, vocational counseling, and tutorial services.

This year, as part of the community's activities, club members donated money and collected clothing for the survivors of two tragic fires in Hoboken which killed a total of 25 persons and left dozens of families homeless in February 1979. The Aspirantes also organized a Thanksgiving food drive, working together with other community agencies and small businesses in Hudson County.

Among this year's program activities were: a Halloween party for elementary school children; Three Kings Celebration; Walk-a-Thon for Deborah Hospital; a "Hispanic Festival"; an Awards Banquet; First-Aid Workshop; and a City Youth Program Workshop.



*Aspira Counselors provide vital person-to-person contact.*

## Passaic County Center

*Talent Search*, based at our Passaic County Center, is designed to identify those young people of extreme financial and cultural needs who have the potential for post-secondary education, but who are essentially isolated from the ordinary educational system.

This 1978-79 counseling program was designed to encourage secondary school or college drop-outs to re-enter educational programs; to provide personal counseling and access to other social service assistance (such as job placement or tutorial assistance); and to disseminate information about and assist clients in financial aid and post-secondary opportunities.

The program deals almost exclusively with urban students from the densely populated target schools in Paterson and Passaic, consisting of John F. Kennedy, Eastside and Passaic High Schools. Here the Hispanic population constitutes almost 40% of the entire Passaic County high school student population of approximately 9,000.

This year the Passaic County Center sponsored its third annual *Talent Search Career Conference* at William Paterson State College. The conference was designed to provide career orientation to 150 high school students. Presentations and discussions in Law, Medicine, Engineering, Architecture and the Arts were conducted by individual professionals and representatives from post-secondary institutions.

This year's program activities included: Junior College Bound Seminar and Services; trip to Rutgers Latin Recruitment Seminar; Annual Awards Night; visits to surrounding colleges; SATs at Kean College; and a Drop-Out Prevention Workshop. There were also two creative arts workshops in theater and dance held in Paterson and funded by the Dodge Foundation.



*Aspirantes planning Club activities.*

### The Aspira Forum

Since 1977 Aspira has held an annual luncheon forum to reach educators, political leaders, business men and women, private funding sources and the Hispanic community. At the first luncheon Luis Nuñez, first President of both Aspira of New York and Aspira of America, and now Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, spoke on the importance of Aspira's work with young Hispanics.

In 1978 Representative Robert Garcia (D-NY), the only Puerto Rican in Congress, told over 100 New Jersey business, civic, education and government leaders that, "Education is the only way to turn around the Hispanic communities in the cities." He also called on private industry to support programs to aid Hispanic youth. "As the government becomes more conservative and less involved in communities, the continuing cooperation of industry is needed 365 days a year." Representative Garcia, who is on the Banking Committee and Subcommittee on the Census and is frequently quoted in the press, is a significant political force in Washington.

In December 1979 Judge José A. Cabranes, the first Puerto Rican appointed to the federal bench, spoke to over 150 attendees. "In serving the needs and fostering the interests of New Jersey's neediest community, Aspira makes a vital—and indispensable—contribution to the life and well-being of all the people of this state," he said.

These forums are aimed at involving and informing the larger community, while providing an opportunity for Board members, staff, and Aspirantes to share their personal experiences and concerns with the wider community.

Aspira is indebted to Fred G. Meissner of New Jersey Bell, Edward Lanihan of PSE&G and Marshall Wolf of Midlantic Bank for their hard work and loyal support on behalf of Aspira.

### A New Place in Town

Aspira moved its Newark headquarters to larger consolidated space in September 1978. This new location houses both the Essex County Student Center and administrative offices for all three Aspira Centers. The new space needed plaster, paint and partitions to make the counseling areas quieter, more private and more attractive. Aspira received a \$12,000 grant from the Charles Hayden Foundation and \$5,000 from the Lillia Babbitt Hyde Foundation towards this renovation. One of the resulting benefits is a permanent art studio, with wall space in the "El Pitirre" gallery to display exhibits by both student and professional artists.

### Creative Arts Workshops

Through a grant from The Gerakline Dodge Foundation, Aspira was able to offer for the first time workshops in the creative arts to students in Essex and Passaic Counties. Taught by professional Hispanic artists, the workshops offer students a personal experience with art, art history and technique, including the performing arts. The participants in the theater and dance workshops at Paterson explored Puerto Rican heritage and culture, read Shakespeare, and rehearsed scenes from "West Side Story". Out of this came an original and intensely personal work about their own feelings and history entitled, "Tell Me About My People".

The students in the graphics workshop in Newark were introduced to elements of drawing, design and composition, and used pencil, charcoal, pastels, watercolors, and linoleum blocks. To encourage them "to see," the teacher took them on walks around Newark, to the Newark Museum, and to the Centro Puertorriqueño de las Artes in Manhattan. Student-produced tiles and prints were exhibited in the newly renovated art studio space and in the new "El Pitirre" gallery at the Essex County Center.

The Dodge Foundation has re-funded this program and workshops in arts and crafts, graphic design, theater, and poetry are being offered in 1980. Coordinated by a Puerto Rican artist, they tap the resources of the Newark community, working cooperatively with and using facilities of colleges and museums.



*Dr. Luis Nieves, Chairperson, Aspira Board of Directors; Ms. Grizel Ubary, Executive Director, Aspira; Mr. Fred G. Meissner, New Jersey Bell; and Judge José A. Cabranes.*

## Comments from Students

"I knew of Aspira one hot summer day when I was hanging around watching the people going by. There was a group of people talking to a friend of mine. I got curious of what they were talking about. They put my name on a list. A few days later, I received a letter from Aspira. I started attending the meetings regularly. I began to take a mini-course to improve my reading skills.

After becoming an Aspirante, I became a more independent person. I began to believe in myself. I began to think about my future. I decided to go back to school and study for a career. I stopped hanging around and staying out in the streets until late at night.

Aspira helped me to go back to school. As it was for me, Aspira can be the answer to a lot of lost young people.

Aspira is what you make of it.

*Always look*

*Stop and see*

*People together will make it*

*I made it with the help of Aspira*

*Remember, it can happen to you*

*All I say is check it out. Aspire!"*

Lydia G.



Through Aspira, students discover new career fields.

"I am a medical school applicant to the class of 1980. Before having any contacts with Aspira I was disoriented and did not know much about the opportunities open to minority applicants. My first contact with Aspira was through John Román who interviewed me at the New Jersey Medical School.

In November I met Teresita Rodríguez who has been very helpful to me and supportive of my desires to be a physician. I have come to all workshops offered by Aspira and they have been very helpful, especially the one about financial assistance for medical students. This workshop dissipated my fears about the inability to pay for medical school.

As a result of my experience with Aspira, I feel I am better prepared for medical school."

Jose De T.

"I am a Puerto Rican woman, full of hopes, motivation and aspiration. I am of this nature because of the many elements that have influenced my life. Being born and raised in Newark and being the middle child of a divorced family was a very difficult experience in my life. But this experience taught and enriched me mentally and emotionally.

The idea of studying medicine was always on my mind. As I became older, I started to pursue this idea to a very great extent. This is where Aspira's Health Careers came into my path. Being given the opportunity of working at a hospital through an internship program, I realized that medicine was definitely my field.

Being chairperson of the Health Careers Club was exhilarating. I organized speakers, workshops and met individuals from every walk of life which was rewarding.

Today I am attending Seton Hall University. I am a prospective member of the Articulated Baccalaureate Medical-Dental Program. A great deal of my being a member of this program is due to this great agency and a special staff member of Aspira. Right now, I am where I want to be.

Viva Aspira and all the Aspirantes! Thank you for being a part of the community."

Norma A.

## Financial Highlights

## Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey

Statement of Support, Revenue and Expenses and Changes in Fund Balances  
Year Ended June 30, 1979

	Current funds		Fixed asset fund	Total all funds
	Unrestricted	Restricted		
Support, grants and revenue:				
Government grants		\$197,429		
Aspira, of America, Inc.		151,218		
Foundations	\$38,320			
Corporations	18,170			
United Way	27,519			
Donated services	2,863	12,098		
Miscellaneous	5,556			
Total support and revenue	92,428	360,745		\$453,173
Expenses:				
Program services:				
Health career opportunities		60,115		60,115
Other career and educational counseling	4,261	300,570		304,831
Total program service	4,261	360,685		364,946
Supporting services:				
Management and general	93,683		\$2,096	95,779
Fund raising	15,000			15,000
Total supporting services	108,638		2,096	110,779
Total expenses	112,944	360,685	2,096	475,725
Excess (deficiency) of support and revenue over expenses	(20,516)	60	(2,096)	(22,552)*
Fund balances, beginning	14,343	12,463	4,823	31,629
Fund balance transfer:				
Excess expenditures of restricted funds	(5,976)	5,976		
Fixed asset transfer		(2,612)	2,612	
Fund balances (deficit), ending	\$(12,149)	\$15,887	\$5,339	\$ 9,077

Complete auditor's report available from Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey upon request.

\*Government funds were reduced by \$83,000 this fiscal year. An additional \$60,500 was raised from private sources to cover program costs. However, there was still a short fall of \$22,522. Aspira will make every effort to eliminate this deficit in 1980.

## Membership

Sam Appel	Ismail Diaz	Hank Martinez	Margaret Rivera
Teresa Araya	Rodney Felder	Gustavo A. Mellander	Julia R. Scott
Frank Ayala, Jr.	Luis H. Fonseca	Myrna Milan	Mary E. Singletary
Alfredo Benun	Edward A. Friedman	Ada A. Santiago Montare	J. Allen Suver
Maria Josefa Canino	John S. Garcia	Richard Muñiz	Gladys E. Tale
Magda E. Caraballo	George D. Harris	Newark Board of Education	Ivelise Torres
Norma Marie Clayton	Viola Van Jones	Richard Otheguey	Freholder Lincoln Turner
John M. Booney	W. W. Kaenzig	Harmon B. Pierce	Iris Varas
Ellen M. Curcio	Marcus Leiderman	George T. Potter	Lana Simkins Watson
Danila Davila	Cong. Andrew Maguire	Sister Grace Reape	Willie J. Young

## Financial Highlights

Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey  
Statement of Functional Expenses  
Year Ended June 30, 1979

	Program services			Supporting services			
	Health career opportunities	Other career and educational counseling	Total	Management and general	Fund raising	Total	Total expenses
Salaries	\$42,637	\$204,705	\$247,342	\$48,931		\$48,931	\$296,273
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	6,127	29,011	35,138	11,434		11,434	46,572
Total salaries and fringe benefits	48,764	233,716	282,480	60,365		60,365	342,845
Occupancy	2,100	15,951	18,051	9,124		9,124	27,175
Telephone and postage	2,728	13,736	16,464	2,263		2,263	18,727
Supplies and equipment rental	2,969	16,415	19,384	6,822		6,822	26,206
Professional fees and contract service payments	1,000	1,850	2,850		\$15,000	15,000	17,850
Travel	729	7,085	7,814	3,011		3,011	10,825
Program activities	640	9,153	9,793	2,153		2,153	11,946
Insurance				1,889		1,889	1,889
Printing	500	2,792	3,292	2,127		2,127	5,419
Student stipends		3,385	3,385				3,385
Other	3	345	348	5,676		5,676	6,024
Total expenses before depreciation	59,433	304,428	363,861	93,430	15,000	108,430	472,291
Depreciation	682	403	1,085	2,349		2,349	3,434
Total expenses	\$60,115	\$304,831	\$364,946	\$95,779	\$15,000	\$110,779	\$475,725

Complete auditor's report available from Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey upon request.

Private Grants and Contributions  
(to March 31, 1980)

Foundations	Corporations	
Mary Owen Borden Memorial Foundation	Airco, Inc.	Mutual Benefit Life Ins. Co.
Braver Philanthropic Foundation	Barton Savings & Loan Assoc.	Nabisco, Inc.
Max & Dora Cooper Family Foundation	Bell Laboratories	National Can Co.
Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation	Boris Kroll Jacquard Looms, Inc.	New Jersey Bell
Charles Hayden Foundation	Broad National Bank	Papetis Hygrade Egg Co.
Lillia Babbitt Hyde Foundation	Broadway Bank & Trust	Pitney-Bowes, Inc.
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Carteret Savings Bank	Prudential Insurance Co.
Fanny & Svante Knistrom Foundation	City National Bank	PSE&G
Jay R. Monroe Memorial Foundation	Edwards & Kelcey, Inc.	Sandoz, Inc.
New York Community Trust	Fidelity Union Trust Co.	Schering-Plough Corporation
Florence & John Schumann Foundation	First Jersey National Bank	Schiffenhaus Packaging Corp.
Turrell Fund	First National State Bank of N.J.	Summit Assoc.
Victoria Foundation	Howard Savings Bank	Supermarkets General Corporation
	Jacobs	<b>Community Funds</b>
	Jersey Central Power & Light Co.	United Way
	Johnson & Johnson Company	YMWCA
	Midlantic National Bank	



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**Aspira, Inc. of New Jersey  
Annual Report**

July 1, 1978 to June 30, 1979

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**Centers**

Executive Office  
87 Halsey Street  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
(201) 642-4047

Essex County Center  
87 Halsey Street  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
(201) 642-8080

Hudson County Center  
172 Newark Avenue  
Jersey City, New Jersey 07302  
(201) 432-8346

Passaic County Center  
128 Broadway  
Paterson, New Jersey 07505  
(201) 345-4540

